

strengthen the investigative skills of state and local authorities.

These minor changes have strengthened an already excellent piece of legislation that will cut fraud and abuse in our Medicare system, restore balance in our health care system, and give us all a better quality of life.

Our government should be given all the tools necessary to combat fraud in our health care system and give Americans the peace of mind that their moms and dads are well cared for in their retirement years. We need to ferret out providers who rip off the system, and Americans need to rest comfortably at night knowing our family members and friends receive the highest quality health care without the fear of being physically, mentally, or financially abused. I urge my colleagues to support the Senior Citizens Protection Act of 1998 because it will provide health care security to our seniors and restore their trust in the people who care for them from morning until night.

CANCER RESEARCH

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend thousands of people were gathered in towns all around America to discuss cancer relief. These cancer survivors and supporters should be commended for their commitment to achieving more research funding for our nation's second leading cause of death.

Nearly everyone has had their life touched by someone who has suffered from cancer. This year, more than 565,000 Americans will die from cancer. That's one in every four deaths in this country! Those are not good odds for the 1.2 million people who will be diagnosed with cancer this year alone. We must put a stop to this awful disease.

A cure for cancer would change our world forever. A seven year old little boy may get to spend one more week with his dad, a 12 year old little girl may get to go to high school, and a grandmother may have the opportunity to see her granddaughter get married. Without our help, none of these things may be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my Colleagues to focus more of our efforts toward the cause, care and cure of cancer. Let's put a stop to this nightmare that haunts our Nation.

THREE FINE DOCTORS WHO CAN ERASE THE PAST.

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Drs. Bryna Kane, Edward Glassberg and Wendy Hoffman, who are offering their medical services to help former gang members turn their lives around. With the help of Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, the Long

Beach Health Department, and the Long Beach Police Department, Drs. Kane, Glassberg, and Hoffman lead Erase the Past, a new program that removes the tattoos of former gang members for free in exchange for community service.

All of us, especially those of us from urban areas, are well aware of the terror that gangs can cause. Los Angeles County alone has approximately 1,000 gangs. Many young people are lured into joining gangs and regret it later. Some find it nearly impossible to leave that part of their lives behind them, however, because of the tattoos they were scarred with as gang members. As a visible sign of a violent past, gang tattoos can make it difficult for former gang members to find jobs and rebuild their lives.

Dr. Kane is all too familiar with unwanted tattoos. She is the daughter of Holocaust survivors, and she remembers vividly the tattoos that the Nazis had burned into the skin of family friends. Those tattoos were an unmistakable and inescapable reminder of the Nazi death camps.

Dr. Kane, a dermatologist, and Drs. Glassberg and Hoffman organized Erase the Past to give these individuals a better chance to leave the world of gang violence. They remove tattoos once every month at Long Beach Memorial. This program is available free of charge to those ages 14 to 25 who have not had a reported gang incident in the past six months. In exchange for the one-hour tattoo removal session, the individual must perform five hours of community service. The removal of a tattoo can require up to three or four treatments.

Erase the Past gives young people a helping hand in leaving gangs and helps them remove a major obstacle to becoming a productive member of society. It also encourages community service. All of the benefits spring from the generosity and ingenuity of these three doctors and the organizations and agencies assisting them. Drs. Kane, Glassberg, and Hoffman and Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, the Long Beach Health Department, and the Long Beach Police Department deserve our gratitude and praise.

Mr. Speaker, I have added a wonderful article on Erase the Past. It is written for the Press-Telegram by a very fine reporter, Bonnie Heald.

PURGING THEIR PAINFUL PAST

As a young child and daughter of Holocaust survivors, Bryna Kane clearly remembers the visible and permanent sign of the Nazi death camps—the tattoos crudely burned into her relatives' arms.

Today, Dr. Bryna Kane is committed to removing more modern tattoos that also are painful reminders of the past—those of former gang members.

Kane, a Long Beach dermatologist, and her partners, Drs. Edward Glassberg and Wendy Hoffman, launched a program at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center on Wednesday to help youths remove the visible emblems that stigmatize them as gang members.

The program, called Erase the Past, offers former gang members free tattoo removals in exchange for community service. The tattoo removal program will be held once a month at the medical center for people between the ages of 14 and 25.

All participants will be screened and must have clean police and probation records without a reported gang incident in the past six months, Kane says.

For each hour-long session of tattoo removal, the participant must perform five hours of community service. Complete tattoo removals may take three to four sessions, Kane says.

"These are kids who want to change," Kane says. "A tattoo is the last vestige of a life they want to forget."

Kane and Glassberg use an ND-YAG laser, the latest technology for tattoo removal, that they purchased for their private Long Beach practice.

Kane's interest in tattoos stems from her childhood in the 1950s.

"I remember so vividly my parents' summer parties. It was 80 degrees, and all these people were wearing long sleeves because they didn't want anyone to see the tattoos the Nazis had burned into their arms. . . . I was a child, so I was eye-level to these people's tattoos. I remember them as ugly scars.

The Long Beach Police Department is providing the program with volunteers for some of the administrative tasks, says Lt. Torben Beith, the officer in charge of the department's gang enforcement section.

A lot of organizations are involved with the program, says Beith, who has been attending monthly planning meetings since last November.

"The tattoos are an excuse, especially for the older ex-gang members," he says. "They say 'I can't get a job because I've got tattoos.'"

"We're targeting younger kids. A lot of them want to get out."

Alvin Bernstein, superintendent of the gang intervention/prevention unit for the city of Long Beach sees many young people who want a fresh start, he says.

"They realize they have made a huge mistake, both male and female," he says. His office, along with the Police Department and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office refer former gang members to Kane's growing list of young people who want to be rid of the visible signs of their former gangs.

There's already a huge waiting list, says Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, who joined the program's kick-off party at Memorial Hospital on Wednesday.

O'Neill would like to see the city help fund the purchase or rental of a second laser machine, she says. Each laser costs between \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Chris Van Gorder, Memorial Medical Center's chief executive officer, has offered the hospital's help in raising money for a second laser. Memorial is providing support staff, facilities, space and security for the program.

As a former police officer, as well as a health care administrator, Van Gorder understands the difficulties faced by young people laden with visible tattoos.

Van Gorder, the former police officer, believes the one-on-one program between doctor and patient can help change a youthful attitude, he says. With gang-related tattoos, "they don't have a chance to get through the initial (job) interview," he says.

And Van Gorder the health care provider adds, "Maybe we can keep some of these kids out of our trauma center."

Anyone wishing to donate to the Erase the Past program, can send a check made payable to the Memorial Medical Center Foundation for Erase the Past, 2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, CA., 90801-3652.